

Daymere

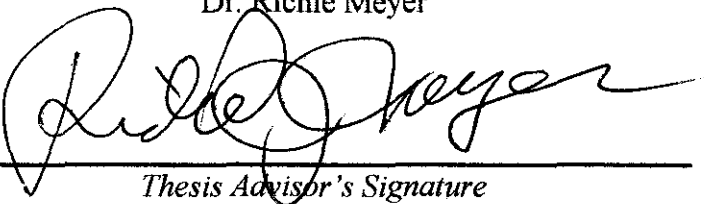
An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

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Abstract

One of the hardest things for a writer to do is to find his or her own voice. We are all influenced by past figures we admire, but in the case *Daymere's* protagonist, Allan Mellish, he has almost become his idol. Struggling with his desire to be a screenwriter and his awkwardness in high school, Allan tends to just lock himself away in his room and is constantly watching Woody Allen films or writing in his notepad. In his creative writing class, his work is finally challenged when a brilliant young girl named Mia makes Allan realize that every piece he writes is essentially an exact replica of a Woody Allen script. Allan is forced to look at himself and discover how to blend his love of Woody's style with his own. In doing so, Allan will finally be able to release his inner voice.

Acknowledgements

-I would like to thank Dr. Richie Meyer for inspiring me to not just enjoy the work of Woody Allen, but to research and learn from it as well. He was not only my advisor but also my mentor and it made this thesis project thoroughly enjoyable.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Staring directly into the camera is a skinny, white male of about 25 years old. His glasses that hang loosely on his nose are completely disproportionate to his body. He wears a flannel shirt and jeans, but all of his clothes are too big for him. Just before he begins to speak, he pushes his glasses back into place with his pointer finger.

ALLAN

My therapist once told me that it is not how you grew up, but whom you admire that shapes the type of person you become. Well, that couldn't be more true. When I was in High School I just wanted desperately to get out. My mother just couldn't understand why a person of my intelligence couldn't do well in school. I was preoccupied. While other kids were trying to get laid, I was attempting to write the greatest coming of age story of all time. However, I had some difficulties coming of age myself, so the story wasn't developing so well. I spent most of my childhood indoors watching movies. And not just any movies, mind you. I watched every Woody Allen movie as often as I could. He was the one I admired. But I spent too much time studying him that I, in turn, became him. My teachers told me that I would fail miserably in the film business because I didn't have a style of my own. I decided that in order to get into NYU's film school, I had to write that one great script. Sounds easy enough, right? Not exactly.

FADE TO:

INT. THEATER

The busyness that goes along with any play production is felt in full force. Hands are working rapidly to tighten lights, put the props in their final resting places, and prep the actors' faces. Sitting in the corner of the stage with a pencil and a pad of paper is a younger Allan. An actress approaches him.

ACTRESS

Um, Allan. I just wanted to know what you thought of my performance during rehearsal?

I mean, I'm kind of freaking out here, being that it's opening night and all.

Allan remains enthralled in his scribbling. He doesn't even acknowledge that she is standing there.

ACTRESS

Um, Allan? I really think I need some feedback.

ALLAN

(confused)

Huh?

ACTRESS

I just asked you a question. Are you even listening to me?

ALLAN

Oh. Oh, jeez. I am really sorry Lindz. I, it's just...

From the other side of the stage a twenty-something man yells towards Allan.

TOM

(yelling)

Allan! Get your skinny ass over here.... NOW!

Getting up very quickly and tucking his notepad under his arm, Allan prepares to run over to Tom.

ALLAN

I'm sorry about this, Lindz. Can we talk about this in a minute?

Without even giving her a chance to answer he rushes away and leaves LINDZ with a blank stare.

ALLAN

Yes, Tom?

TOM

Jesus, Allan. We go on in one hour. ONE HOUR! You haven't done anything today.

(pointing to the hustle and bustle on stage)

These are your actors, man. These are your puppets. HELP THEM! You know,
sometimes I question why you are even involved.

ALLAN

I'm really sorry, Tom. Really. It's just that I had some ideas and I...

TOM

You're always sorry. Be sorry later. There's no time for it right now. You are the
director. This is what you want to do with your life, man. Do you know how hard it was
for me to get you this gig?

ALLAN

I know, I know! And don't think I don't appreciate it. But it's just, ever since...

TOM

(still finishing the same thought from before)

I know that Community Theater isn't the greatest, but hey... you gotta start somewhere,
right?

ALLAN

Right. But ya see... The thing is... Well, I don't think I wan...

TOM

Good! Now get back out there and give those actors a little direction. Please!!!

TOM shoves ALLAN in the direction of the group of confused looking actors standing in the middle of the stage. They all stare at him as if waiting for him to give the "I Have A Dream" speech. Allan doesn't know what to do.

ALLAN

Um...

Hey, everyone.

(clears throat)

Uh. Do you guys have any questions or suggestions before you go on tonight?

At once, every single hand in the crowd flies up in the air. ALLAN gets a look on his face that could only be compared to that of nausea. Beads of sweat begin to trickle down his pale face and he feels the need to gasp for air.

ALLAN

(to himself)

Oh, God...

CUT TO

INT. BEDROOM

The same expression from the last scene is on ALLAN's face now. He looks up, and then down quickly and it is revealed that he has finally gotten an idea and is furiously writing on his notepad from the theater. ALLAN is sitting on his bed in a room covered from wall to wall with movie posters and videotapes.

A knock on the door...

ALLAN

Yup?

Allan's mom.

MARGARET

Hey there, my little Woody.

ALLAN

Mom, please.

MARGARET

How's the script coming?

ALLAN

Not too bad. If I can keep it up, I'll be to sixty pages by dinner.

MARGARET

Did you finish your homework?

ALLAN

(half-heartedly)

Mmmhmm.

MARGARET

Well, can I see it?

ALLAN

Mom, I'm really busy. Can we do this later?

MARGARET

I'm just worried about you, Allan. You don't seem to do anything anymore but write and rewrite that script.

ALLAN

I'm fine, Mom. I just have to make it perfect, you know?

MARGARET

Yeah.

(pause)

Oh, hey. Do you want to go see a movie tomorrow afternoon?

ALLAN

Can't...

Simultaneously

ALLAN/MARGARET

Gotta write.

MARGARET

Okay. Well, dinner will be ready in an hour.

ALLAN

Mkay.

MARGARET closes the door and ALLAN continues to furiously scribble down his ideas.

CUT TO

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL

Cars and kids are continuously pouring onto the High School property. TOM and ALLAN are walking down the sidewalk together.

TOM

Are you planning on asking anyone to prom?

ALLAN

What?

(pondering)

Where did that come from?

TOM

It's a very logical question, man. You gotta get your head outta that script and into the real world for a little while, at least.

ALLAN

No way... Once I pull myself out, I'll never get back in and I'll never get accepted to NYU, that's for sure.

TOM

You know they don't just look for your ideas, Allan. You have to keep your grades up too.

ALLAN

Wow...

TOM

What?

ALLAN

(sarcastically emotional)

It's just... I never knew what it was like to have a father.

TOM

Whatever, man. I'm just trying to push you to expand your horizons, that's all.

ALLAN

Yeah, but I can't do that at some vain attempt at a school sponsored event designed for the sole purpose of proving who is popular, who is destined for greatness, and who is doomed to a life of menial work and sub-par retirement benefits. I can't do it. I won't.

TOM

You know, when I was in high school I never went to my prom and I've regretted it ever since.

ALLAN

(scoffing)

Yeah.

TOM

(realizing that ALLAN doesn't care)

K. Well maybe you should just think about it.

ALLAN

There's nothing to think about.

CUT TO

INT. CLASSROOM

Students are writing fervently at their desks, while TOM, who appears to be their instructor paces back and forth in front of the classroom. Allan is the most enthusiastic writer in the class. He seems to have sprouted some brilliant ideas and the confidence he feels from that is showing through because of the speed in which he is writing.

TOM

Okay, guys. Is everybody just about done?

The class all mumbles in somewhat of an agreement with their teacher. They all continue to write, though.

TOM

Pencils down. We've done enough for today. Who wants to go first?

Not one person raises his or her hand. In fact, not one person even looks up to make eye contact with their teacher.

TOM

(sympathetically)

Come on guys, it's not that bad... is it?

Okay, if no one volunteers, I'm gonna have to pick somebody.

(pauses and watches as everyone looks desperately around the room for that one brave person to succumb to the pressure)

No one? Alright then... Jake, how about you?

Jake is a clean cut kid of about 18. He looks like an All-American boy who has never had a care or trouble in the world. Though he did not volunteer to read, the fact that he was picked first seems to stroke his ego. Exuding enormous confidence, he begins to read.

JAKE

(clears throat)

Okay. My script is about a gang of former drug lords in a concentration camp in Nazi-Germany.

(clears throat again)

...“Joey the Foot” looked around the barbed-wire fence for a way to get he and his cronies out of that joint. “Boys?” he said confidently. “Tonight, we ride.” Cheers erupt from the group of thinning thugs nestled in behind Joey. They know their leader won’t let the down now.

ALLAN is barely listening to what is going on in the classroom, but as soon as TOM had called on JAKE to read, he knew he better pay attention if he wanted a good laugh and his own personal ego boost. ALLAN knows that no matter how terrible of a script he might end up writing, nothing would compare to the trite drivel that never ceased to drip out of JAKE’s pen. ALLAN sighs very loudly as JAKE continues on with his script.

About 20 minutes later...

JAKE

...”Don’t give up, Petey. Don’t ever give up. We’ll make it out of here in one piece, you’ll see.” Petey looks up into Joey the Foot’s eyes one last time and then closes them tightly after gasping for his last breath of air. “No! No!” Joey begins to scream. He throws his fist up to the sky and begins to curse, “Damn you, Hitler! Damn you!”
(coming out of his flustered state, JAKE looks up, completely satisfied with his piece)

And that’s all I got done today.

(he smiles)

ALLAN is trying his hardest not to burst into fits of laughter, but after a few minutes of stifling it, he can't take it anymore.

ALLAN

Ahhh, hahahahahahahahahahaha!

(wiping tears from his gleaming face)

Oh, man.

(still giggling uncontrollably)

TOM

Um, well, Jake. That was...

ALLAN

(still laughing, he begins to cough from being so worked up)

God bless you, Jake.

(tears continuing to stream down)

JAKE

(utterly confused)

Wha... I don't understand. Mr. Jessup?

TOM

Well, Jake. I know we are all trying our best to write that one great script, but your's?

Well, yours just isn't it.

ALLAN

(still laughing and crying)

TOM

(trying to keep his cool)

Okay, Allan. That's enough. I think Jake understands that he needs to work on his approach. Let's leave it at that.

(pauses while giving a pity smile in JAKE's direction)

Why don't we hear what you've got for us today, Mr. Mellish.

ALLAN

(finally calmed down)

Okay, sure. No problem. My script is about a guy who, through a series of mishaps, one being that the current president is shot to death, becomes the leader of a tiny third-world country.

From the back corner of the room, ALLAN hears the familiar noise in which he associates with a scoff. He turns around to see a very plain, yet somewhat attractive girl shaking her head negatively in his direction.

ALLAN

Excuse me?

The girl makes one more noise then looks back down at her paper. She is obviously the quiet type, but there was something about ALLAN's script idea that certainly set her off.

TOM

Ms. Johansson? Do you have something to say to Allan?

MIA Johansson looks up at TOM first and then sets her glaze on ALLAN.

MIA

Well yes, sir, I actually do. You see, I thought this was a creative writing class.

TOM

Okay. So where are you going with this?

MIA

Well it's just...

I mean beyond the obvious physical similarities between the two, don't you find it a bit funny that every idea that Allan comes up with is based almost entirely on a Woody

Allen film?

TOM

What are you talking about, Ms. Johansson?

MIA

Bananas!

ALLAN

(in sheer defense of himself)

What?!?

MIA

You just read the synopsis for Bananas, ALLAN!

ALLAN

I...

(realizing he's done it again)

Oh my God.

MIA

(aside)

There's a surprise.

ALLAN

(to himself)

I thought I had a solid idea.

MIA

You never have a solid idea, Allan. Maybe you should stop watching so many movies,
and start living your own life, instead of recreating Woody's.

TOM

Okay you guys, I think we are done with the roast for today. I'll see you all back here
tomorrow. Try to brush up your ideas before you come in to write again, k?

As soon as TOM finishes his parting speech, the bell rings and the students begin to bolt out of their seats... anxious to get out of the uncomfortable environment that existed for the past hour and a half. ALLAN however, doesn't move an inch. He has the look of someone deep in a daydream, and when everyone has left the room, TOM approaches ALLAN.

TOM

Whacha thinkin' about there?

ALLAN

(half dazed)

Huh? Oh, I...

TOM

What a class, huh? I mean jeez. Does that girl have it in for you or what?

ALLAN

Oh, Mia? I dunno.

TOM

She's callin' you on something you already realize.

(pause)

You do realize that you do that all the time, don't you Allan?

ALLAN

Do what?

TOM

I mean, just last month you basically rewrote Allan Mellish's 21st century version of

Annie Hall.

ALLAN

What?!?!? Which one?

TOM

The one that opened with your main character talking about how he and

(using the quotation fingers)

“Angie” had broken up. You don’t even try to disguise the fact that you want to be the

Woody Allen incarnate.

ALLAN

That is the biggest fallacy I have heard come out of your mouth in all of the years I’ve

known you. What are you trying to say?

TOM

It’s just that maybe you need to concentrate more on your directing skills than on your

writing.

ALLAN

This is my life, Tom! Why are you even passing me in this class if you don’t think I can

do it?

TOM

Well, because you aren’t really passing anything else. If you want to go to college to

pursue this career, you need to actually graduate high school, Allan.

ALLAN

(aside)

I can't believe this.

TOM

I know, I'm sorry. I just didn't want to hurt your feelings.

ALLAN

Well, what am I supposed to do? This entry script is due next week and I don't have anything.

TOM

What you need is a muse.

ALLAN

Pardon?

TOM

A muse. Someone or something that will inspire you to write your best.

ALLAN

I know what a muse is. Where am I going to find one?

TOM shrugs his shoulders and ALLAN is left to fend for himself.

CUT TO

INT. BEDROOM

ALLAN's face is twisted in a painful expression as he sits on his bed with a pen in his hand.

ALLAN

This sucks.

ALLAN realizes that he needs to take a little break from writing. Since it is dusk outside and the sun will be set in just a few short minutes, he decides to take a walk. Perhaps a brilliant epiphany will come of his rare exercise experience.

ALLAN throws his pad and pen down and rushes down the hall towards his front door. His mom is sitting on the couch watching TV.

MARGARET

Where ya going, Allan?

ALLAN

For a walk. I'll be back in a little bit.

MARGARET

Careful, hun. It's getting really dark outside.

ALLAN

(as he shuts the front door)

K!

ALLAN begins running down the street. His relaxing walk has turned into a determined stride to reach someone or something. He comes to an abrupt halt at a phone booth just down the block from his house. He waits as a lady hangs up the phone, gives him a weak little smile and leaves the booth. Rushing into the booth, he picks up the phone directory. Flipping rapidly through the pages, he comes to a stop halfway through the book. He begins thumbing down the "J"s... he is obviously looking up MIA's address.

After a few seconds, ALLAN looks a little distraught. There are about 10 Johanssons listed in the directory. He tears out the page, and decides to just go to every house, in order as they are listed in the phone book.

EXT. BROWNSTONE

ALLAN apprehensively approaches the steep stoop of the lofty brownstone. This is the first address on the list of Johanssons. He climbs the steps and knocks three times on the gold plated lion face knocker. Nothing. He knocks two more times. Suddenly he hears a rustling from the bushes just below the stoop.

LITTLE BOY

You're doing it wrong.

ALLAN

(perplexed because he has yet to see where the noise is coming from)

Excuse me?

LITTLE BOY

(appearing from behind the shrub)

I said you're doing it wrong.

ALLAN

I don't understand.

LITTLE BOY

Mr. Johansson can't hear. Knockin' on that door won't get him to come down. You gotta pull that string over there.

The LITTLE BOY points to a rope that appears to be yanked from an antique toilet flusher.

LITTLE BOY

Go on. It triggers a pager that he wears on his belt so he can feel the vibration.

ALLAN looks at the boy like he is crazy. What kind of person would have a contraption like that?

LITTLE BOY

He's got a lot of money. Now, go on.

ALLAN sheepishly pulls on the rope just once. He halfheartedly expected some kind of blaring noise to ensue, but when he released the rope, nothing happened. He turned around to question the LITTLE BOY, but he was no longer in view. When ALLAN turned back around the mammoth door had been opened and a strikingly handsome man in his 40s stood in the doorway. ALLAN looks at the waistline of this man and sees a flashing pager. This must be him.

MR. JOHANSSON

(signing)

Can I help you?

Not understanding what was just "said" to him, ALLAN raises his shoulders in question.

MR. JOHANSSON, who apparently hasn't been deaf his entire life, speaks in a clear, yet somewhat raised voice.

MR. JOHANSSON

Can I help you?

ALLAN

(clearing his throat nervously)

Um. You wouldn't happen to have a daughter, would you?

MR. JOHANSSON

Mia.

ALLAN

Yeah! Mia! You can hear me?

MR. JOHANSSON

Nope, I sure can't. I can read your lips just fine, though. Did you want to see Mia?

ALLAN

Uh, yes. Yes, please... sir.

MR. JOHANSSON

You don't have to do that, son. Come on in.

(reaching out his hand)

I'm Dan. Just call me Dan.

ALLAN

Um. Okay.

MR. JOHANSSON

I'll be right back.

As DAN disappears around the corner, ALLAN has time to review the house he has just stepped into. It is incredible. There are about three visible stories with a winding, spiraling staircase. The walls lined with plaques and trophies bearing the names DAN JOHANSSON and a few with MIA on them as well. He notices that the only pictures around contain the images of DAN and MIA... no one else.

ALLAN turns back towards the stairs and the young MIA from the classroom is hopping down the steps in a hooded sweatshirt and jeans. She is dressed simply, yet is extremely attractive to ALLAN.

MIA

Hey, Allan.

ALLAN

Hey, Mia.

MIA

Look... I'm sorry about...

ALLAN

No, no. Actually, that's why I came here tonight.

MIA

For a confrontation?

ALLAN

(chuckles)

No. I need your help.

MIA

I don't get it.

ALLAN

Well, I kinda wanna dig into your skull a bit.

MIA

Allan. I'm confused.

ALLAN

Well, you always have such creative, imaginative stories. No one ever says much negatively towards your short stories in class, and I was just wondering if you could teach me to write like you?

MIA

Well, I'm flattered, but no one can teach you to find your voice. You have to do that on your own.

ALLAN

Yeah. But I've tried... I've tried everything. I don't understand why I'm having such a hard time with this. I mean, I have these creative surges and I start writing... thinking I'm creating something brilliant... and then...

MIA

And then?

ALLAN

Come on, I don't have to finish that sentence.

MIA

Okay. Well, there's no denying the fact that you just recreate Allen works.

ALLAN

Yeah. So what do you do to create your own?

MIA

I don't know, Allan. I just do. I can't really help you with this.

ALLAN

Yes you can. I know you can.

MIA

I tell you what. Why don't you start a new story and when you are well into it, bring me the pages and I'll review it.

ALLAN

(excitedly)

Yeah! Okay, I can do that! I'll have something for you in a couple of days.

MIA

Okay, Allan. Now can you get out of my house. It's 11 at night and I'm tired.

ALLAN

Oh. Oh, yeah, sure! Thank you.

MIA

‘Night.

ALLAN quickly, but excitedly exits the brownstone. Inspired by his brief conversation with MIA, he runs all the way home determined to start writing his brilliant script.

CUT TO

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA: NEXT DAY

There are hundreds of teenagers moving from table to table and chomping down on their neatly packaged lunches from home. In the corner TOM and ALLAN are sitting at a table with a bunch of older people. This is obviously one of the faculty lunch tables. ALLAN seems to be exclusively people watching.

An athletically fit boy and a tall, thin-legged blonde walk past ALLAN's table hand in hand.

ALLAN

(scoffing noise, once again)

TOM

Why do you always do that?

ALLAN

Do what?

TOM

Make that noise whenever they walk by?

ALLAN

Oh come on. You can't tell me you don't feel it too?

TOM

What? Jealousy?

ALLAN

(extremely defensive tone)

NO!

(pausing to shake off the feeling he is talking about)

Disgust.

TOM

No, I don't. And I don't know why you do.

ALLAN

Please! They are so shallow that a gnat wouldn't drown in their pool.

TOM

Do you even know them?

ALLAN

No. And I don't care to.

TOM

Hmm.

ALLAN

What? Okay, ya know what? I'll see you in class.

ALLAN gets up with his trash and walks heatedly away from TOM. TOM sits at the table with a sympathetic look on his face as he watches ALLAN exit.

INT. CLASSROOM

This scene happens in a daze. Many students are presenting their stories to the rest of the class, but ALLAN is not listening. He seems to be in deep thought. His pen is propped in the writing position, but it is not moving. In fact, ALLAN hasn't written a word on his paper the entire class period.

The bell rings and everyone gets up. ALLAN has the look of defeat on his face, but at least he wasn't called on to share his script... because he doesn't have one.

EXT. STREETS OF A DOWNTOWN CITY: MID-AFTERNOON: FRIDAY

ALLAN is alone. As he walks down the street he witnesses what he sees as the atrocities of mankind: kids making out in alleys, smoking on the corners, and waiting outside of drugstores for that illegal, underage purchase of a weekend alcohol supply. As ALLAN turns the corner that nears his house, he sees a figure sitting against the brick wall of the building with a book in its hands.

ALLAN

(to the figure)

Mia?

Coming into focus, Allan sees the plain looking MIA staring up at him. She is holding a binder filled with loose-leafed papers with handwritten passages on each one of them.

MIA

Oh, hey Allan.

(getting up)

What are you doing out here?

ALLAN

(pointing to a lot of row houses)

I live right over there.

(pauses)

Um, what are you doing out here?

MIA

Oh. This is where I go to think.

ALLAN

Not exactly the best neighborhood, is it?

MIA

On the contrary, this is the best place to get ideas.

ALLAN

How's that?

MIA

There's so much going on around here.

ALLAN

(staring at the messiness of youth and naivety)

Are you kidding me? These buffoons do nothing but distract. They will be the downfall
of society... just give 'em a few years.

MIA

Hmm.

ALLAN

Yes?

MIA

So how's the new script going?

ALLAN

Um. Well, honestly?

(nervously)

Not well.

MIA

Do you mind if I have a look at it?

ALLAN

Well... I don't have it on me. It's at my house.

MIA

Well, we're right here. Can I come over and look at it?

ALLAN

I, uh...

I don't know if that's such a good idea.

MIA

Why not?

ALLAN

It's my mom, you see. She doesn't like...

MIA

Oh, come on, Allan. It'll be fine.

ALLAN

(annoyed by her brash nature)

K.

ALLAN begins walking towards his house without looking back. He is secretly hoping that MIA isn't following him anymore. He can't bare the thought of showing someone so talented, yet so critical, his blank pad of paper. He's had 2 days since she proposed the idea of a writing partnership, and he hasn't even come up with a title yet.

EXT. ALLAN'S APT. BUILDING

ALLAN reaches for the door of the apartment complex, but before opening it he looks back anxiously at MIA.

ALLAN

Um, can you wait out here for a minute?

MIA

Sure.

ALLAN runs inside the building leaving MIA standing just outside the door. He runs up the steps to the second floor and fumbles ferociously through his left pocket for his key. Upon finding it, he unlocks the door and rushes into his apartment. ALLAN frantically searches throughout his apartment to make sure that his mother is still at work. Finally with a sigh of relief that the coast is clear, he runs back downstairs and holds the door open for MIA to enter.

ALLAN

Come on in. It's on the second floor.

She follows ALLAN quickly and confidently up the stairs. He opens the door once again and leads MIA inside.

She gazes longingly at the apartment.

ALLAN

You okay?

MIA

Yeah.

(pauses)

Oh yeah! This is great, Allan!

ALLAN

(confused)

Huh? What's great?

MIA

This place. What a think-tank, huh?

ALLAN

Um, not really. It's a little too cramped for my liking.

Do you want something to drink?

MIA

No thanks, I'm good. Now let's see that script of yours.

A look of horror appears on ALLAN's face. In the rush to make sure his mother wasn't home, he had completely forgotten why they had gone there in the first place.

ALLAN

Oh. Right. K. Follow me.

They both come upon his bedroom door. ALLAN creaks open the door slowly as if half expecting something to jump out at him. When nothing happens, he flings it open the rest of the way and flicks on the light. His small lamp on his end table illuminates the disaster area his room has become. There are papers lying everywhere. ALLAN moves towards the bed and proceeds to clear a space where he and MIA can sit down.

MIA

Is this it?

ALLAN turns towards her to see that she is holding his unopened notebook in her hands. She is about to open it.

ALLAN

Wait!

(pausing to realize he sounds a bit too desperate)

I, uh... let me find it for you.

MIA hands him the notebook. He starts to thumb slowly through the pad. As he is doing so, MIA is perusing the walls of ALLAN's room. ALLAN is still flipping the pages when MIA has reached the fourth wall.

MIA

So?

ALLAN

I'm having a little trouble finding it. I'm not very organized, as you can see.

(pointing at the messy room)

MIA

You haven't done it yet, have you?

ALLAN

I beg your pardon?

MIA

Come on. If you were proud of it, you'd have shown me by now.

ALLAN

I, uh...

(admitting defeat)

I've kind of hit a roadblock, if you know what I mean.

MIA

(standing up quickly)

Well, why didn't you tell me that? What's the problem?

ALLAN

I can't come up with anything great. The mediocrity of everything I have attempted to create is just building the Great Wall around my new ideas.

MIA

Oh, don't be so dramatic.

(pausing to take another quick look around his bedroom)

You know what your problem is?

(not waiting for a reply)

It's this room.

ALLAN

Hey, now.

(pauses to reevaluate the situation)

What's wrong with this room?

MIA

You spend too much time in it. How often do you write away from your bedroom?

ALLAN

Well. I guess I don't really.

(becoming defensive)

But I don't need to. My greatest creations have come from basking in this room. The atmosphere is perfect.

MIA

I beg to differ.

(walking closer to one of his postered walls)

You see?

(she slowly rubs her hand across a clump of movie posters)

ALLAN

No... I don't?

MIA

You spend so much time with the images and ideas of other filmmakers and story creators that you are completely engulfed by them.

How can you come up with original ideas when you are surrounded by nothing but stale reflections of movies that have already been made?

ALLAN

Yeah. But this is where I feel most comfortable!

MIA

And there's your problem right there!!!

ALLAN

(stumbling to respond to what MIA just said... he's not entirely sure what she means)

You lost me.

MIA

How are you ever going to be forced to write something new if you are comfortable?
You need to be challenged, you need to experience something you've never experienced
before in order to create something you've never created before.

ALLAN

Yeah, but...

(pauses to ponder)

Oh my God! You are absolutely right!

MIA

(not looking at him, but still perusing his poster collection she quickly and plainly states)

I know I am.

ALLAN

So help me do that!

You are gonna help me, right?

MIA

I suppose.

ALLAN

Come on! Please, Mia. It's a matter of life and death.

MIA

Okay. Of course I'll help you. But please lay off the drama... we'll get enough of that in your writing... I hope.

MIA turns back to face ALLAN.

MIA

What we need to do first, is discover what makes you squirm?

ALLAN

What? Why?

MIA

Because where you feel the most vulnerable is where you're going to be your most creative.

ALLAN

Okay. Okay... um...

MIA

(still staring straight in his eyes)

Are you kidding me with this?

ALLAN

I don't follow.

MIA

What is the one thing that pisses you off more than anything else on the planet?

ALLAN remains standing with his eyes to the ceiling, searching for the answer somewhere in his partitioned tiles.

MIA

(taking a deep sigh)

Popularity.

ALLAN

What about it?

MIA

Are you really that dense? You scoff every time a kid from the popular group even begins to speak. I don't know what your problem is with people like the jocks and the cheerleaders, but I think that if you spent some time with them and got to know them, you might be motivated to write something out of the ordinary.

ALLAN

Oh, no no no no no. I don't think that's such a good idea. Besides, how am I going to be able to spend time with them if they don't even give me the time of day?

MIA

How do you know they wouldn't give you the time? Have you ever even tried to talk to one of them?

ALLAN

Well, no, but that's not...

MIA

Okay. Case and point.

You know, people aren't as judgmental as you think they are. In fact, they are probably more put off by you than you are of them.

ALLAN

What's that supposed to mean?

MIA

I'm just saying that you pass judgment on people before you even get to know them. It's a little brazen of you, don't you think?

ALLAN

Yeah, but you gotta admit... people like that are...

MIA

Are what?

ALLAN

(slowly removing the foot from his mouth)

Nevermind.

(changing the subject and the tone of his voice)

So what's the plan?

FADE TO:

INT. ALLAN'S APT/LIVING ROOM

ALLAN is laying on his sofa staring at the ceiling. It is quickly approaching dusk and his mother still isn't home. He lifts up his wrist to look at his watch... it reads 8:02 p.m. ALLAN lays his arm back down next to his torso and looks back up to the ceiling. His eyes, however, begin to fade and ALLAN falls asleep.

FADE TO:

A considerable amount of time has passed. It is now pitch black outside and ALLAN is still fast asleep on the sofa. He wakes with a jolt, however, at the sound of keys in the deadbolt. ALLAN lifts up his arm to check his watch again and it reads 1:15 a.m. He realizes that his MOTHER is just getting home and she'll be quite upset to find him still up at this hour. He begins to bolt for his bedroom, but halts when he hears a man's voice along with his mother's.

MAN

Wow, it's really late. I hope you don't mind that I kept you out this late, Mags.

MARGARET

Don't be ridiculous, Tom. I had a wonderful time with you, as usual.

ALLAN turns around the corner and stands in his doorway so as not to be seen, but he is at a vantage point because he can still see the front door. With a heavily confused

expression on his face, ALLAN squints to see the man with whom his mother has been with this entire evening.

MARGARET turns on the kitchen light and with the new visuals ALLAN has now gained, he gasps! The TOM his mother was out with was not just any TOM, it was his TOM!

TOM

Do you think we'll wake him?

MARGARET

No chance. That kid can sleep through anything. Plus, he usually goes to sleep around

11 o'clock so he's been out for quite a while. Don't worry about it.

TOM

He's really a great kid, Mags.

MARGARET

I agree. I just wish he would put himself out there more. Does he socialize with a lot of people at school?

TOM

To be honest, not really? He and I have a wonderful relationship, but he just doesn't have a whole lot of friends his age that I can speak of.

MARGARET

(more to herself than anything)

I don't know what the problem is. He locks himself up in that mess of his he calls a room and just watches movies and writes. And he doesn't seem upset at the fact that he never gets a phone call to go out with people. It's almost like he likes being a loner.

(to TOM)

You know?

TOM

Well, some people are just like that. Some of the most creative geniuses have been documented as being loners, you know. They get lost in their heads and don't have the time or the need to fraternize with us lowly mortals.

MARGARET

Yeah, but Allan isn't really a genius, he's just antisocial. You said it yourself that his writing needs vast improvement before he can even consider submitting one of his works to colleges.

TOM

Well that's true. But, he just needs to find his niche. He watches too many movies and tries to create worlds for his characters that have already been established many times before. He is a good writer, he just doesn't have solid ideas right now.